

# Documents on Diplomacy: The Source

## The Embargo Act

*The French Duke of Cadore to General Armstrong, Paris, August 5, 1807*

Sir:  
I have laid before His Majesty, the Emperor and King, the act of Congress of the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, taken from the *Gazette of the United States*, which you have sent to me.

His Majesty could have wished that this act, and all the other acts of the Government of the United States, which interest France, had always been officially made known to him. In general, he has only had a knowledge of them indirectly, and after a long interval of time. There have resulted from this delay serious inconveniences, which would not have existed if these acts had been promptly and officially communicated.

The Emperor had applauded the general embargo laid by the United States on all their vessels, because that measure, if it has been prejudicial to France, had in it at least nothing offensive to her honor. It has caused her to lose her colonies of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Cayenne; the Emperor has not complained of it. He has made this sacrifice to the principle which had determined the Americans to lay the embargo, inspiring them with the noble resolution of interdicting to themselves the ocean, rather than to submit to the laws of those who wished to make themselves the tyrants (*les dominateurs*) of it.

The act of the 1<sup>st</sup> March has raised the embargo, and substituted for it a measure the most injurious of France.

This act, of which the Emperor knew nothing until very lately, interdicted to American vessels the commerce of France, at the time it authorized that to Spain, Naples, and Holland, that is to say, the countries under French influence, and denounced confiscation against all French vessels which should enter the ports of America. Reprisal was a right, and commanded by the dignity of France, a circumstance on which it was impossible to make a compromise (*de transiger*.) The sequestration of all American vessels in France has been the necessary consequence of the measure taken by Congress.

Now Congress retrace their steps, (*revient sur ses pas*;) they revoke the act of the 1<sup>st</sup> of March; the ports of America are open

to French commerce, and France is no longer interdicted to the Americans; in short, Congress engages to oppose itself to that of one of the Belligerent Powers which should refuse to acknowledge the rights of neutrals.

In this new state of things, I am authorized to declare to you, sir, that the decrees of Berlin and Milan are revoked, and that after the 1<sup>st</sup> of November they shall cease to have effect; it being understood that, in consequence of this declaration, the English shall revoke their orders in council, and renounce the new principles of blockade, which they have wished to establish; or that the United States, conformably to the act you have just communicated, shall cause their rights to be respected by the English.

It is with the most particular satisfaction, sir, that I make known to you this determination of the Emperor. His Majesty loves the Americans. Their prosperity and their commerce are within the scope of his policy.

The independence of America is one of the principal titles of glory to France. Since that epoch, the Emperor is pleased in aggrandizing the United States, and under all circumstances, that which can contribute to the independence, to the prosperity, and the liberty of the Americans, the Emperor will consider as conformable with the interests of his empire.

Accept, sir, the assurances of my high consideration,

CHAMPAGNY, DUKE DE CADORE

### Source

*The Napoleon Series*, [www.napoleon-series.org](http://www.napoleon-series.org)

[http://www.napoleon-series.org/research/government/france/decrees/c\\_decrees19.html](http://www.napoleon-series.org/research/government/france/decrees/c_decrees19.html)